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Chapter 7: Connecting ‘Englishness’, Black and minoritised ethnic communities and sport: A conceptual framework

By Thomas Fletcher (Leeds Beckett University, UK) &

Jim Lusted (University of Northampton, UK)

Introduction

Sport continues to be one of the primary means through which notions of ‘Englishness’ and ‘Britishness’ are constructed, contested and resisted.¹ For most, these identities are taken for granted, part of the quotidian and iconography of everyday life. Because our sense of nationhood seems so obvious and natural, it is often difficult to conceptualise our sense of self without reference to some idea of national identity. The very essence of national identity has at its heart the demarcation of boundaries; between ‘us and them’; being seen to belong to a national collective privileges some groups at the expense of others (Skey, 2013). Increasingly, work on belonging and national identity has focused on those groups which are frequently excluded from dominant narratives of nation (see Burdsey, 2007; Fletcher, 2012; Ratna, 2014). Findings have shown a consistent pattern whereby Black and minoritised ethnic communities (more often than not defined by their phenotypical appearance as being ‘non-White’) have been interpreted as a

¹ Throughout this chapter the terms ‘Englishness’ and ‘Britishness’ are presented in ‘scare quotes’ to demonstrate that these ideas are social constructions and subject to differing interpretation, definition and contestation, both temporally and spatially. We adopt the position that there are multiple, often conflicting, ways of talking about the same nation.

threat to a dominant White 'British' or 'English' culture.² While studies on minoritised ethnic communities' sense of national belonging and identity have increased substantially in the last two decades, we still know very little about these within the context of sport.

The legacy of the role of sport in the colonial project of the British Empire, combined with more recent connections between sport and far right fascist/nationalist politics has made the association between 'Britishness', 'Englishness' and ethnic identity(ies) a particularly intriguing one. At the same time, questions of identity, nationalism, 'race' and migration, as well as concerns over social cohesion and inclusion, have been central to British government sport policies for over 40 years. More recent discussions have concerned whether or not the UK is and should be a multicultural society, the extent to which understandings of 'race' and racial difference structure this debate and the place of sport within this (see Carrington, Fletcher and McDonald, 2016). It is perhaps surprising, then, that the body of research that explores the nexus of 'Englishness', ethnicity and sport is quite under developed. With a few notable exceptions, the scrutiny of these connections is in its infancy. Given this, the chapter that follows proposes a conceptual framework that considers a range of possible avenues from which to explore this nexus. After some introductory comments about the regular fusion of 'Britishness' and 'Englishness', particularly in studies of sport, we outline four concepts that can offer a theoretical springboard to consider the connections between 'Englishness' and ethnicity, particularly in relation to the experiences of minoritised ethnic communities. We conclude by arguing that the underlying and perhaps central issue relates to the

² We use the term Black and minoritised ethnic rather than Black and minority ethnic in order to stress the process of minoritising; that is, in societies where whiteness prevails, Black and minoritised ethnic communities are actively excluded and subordinated. This is processual.

sense of belonging, and that the experience and agency of minoritised ethnic communities makes notions of English and British increasingly cumbersome if not inapplicable in the contemporary context.

British or English? The conceptual (con)fusion of national identity

Any attempt to discuss a singular notion of 'Englishness' – in whatever context – is problematic, due to the ambiguity, multiple meanings and contested nature of such a concept. Firstly, the differentiation between England/English and Britain/British are regularly (con)fused; the terms frequently applied interchangeably. Given the current political situation in the UK, differentiation is required for us to correctly examine national identity in contemporary British sport. Demands for autonomy from Scotland and Wales, and the ongoing sectarian conflicts in Northern Ireland brings into question whether a single 'Britishness' has ever been more vulnerable or of less relevance in all these countries than today. Whereas previously, 'Englishness' has subsumed itself within a definition of 'Britishness', the increasingly fragmented nature of 'Britain' has also called 'Englishness' into dispute.

The origins and expansion of the British Empire, and the role of sport in this process, was largely commanded by the English, as opposed to Britain as a national collective. Therefore, to fully account for the relationship between sport and colonisation we must therefore also consider the process of 'internal colonization' (Malcolm 2013: 51). When one refers to sport and Britain, the British, or the British Empire, a more accurate reading would be to think of England and the English, which also helps account for the unequal distribution of power between the 'home'

nations within the Empire. Increasingly, the English have begun to realise that 'Englishness' is distinct from 'Britishness', and sport has symbolic importance as one of a few cultural forms where a particular form of English identity is given public expression (see Gibbons & Lusted 2007; Gibbons 2014).

Part of the process of national identity formation is about working out who is included and who is excluded. This requires regularly re-inventing and clearly, ethnicity is likely to play a defining role in this process. For Skey (2013: 42), while particular national signifiers, such as places, people or symbols (like sport), may become viewed by a substantial majority as largely axiomatic, the questions of *who* or *what* belongs to the nation and *why* are always part of an ongoing process of contestation:

After all, these choices by definition exclude other possible selections, and therefore the debate about what it means to be an authentic member of the nation both reflect and constitutes wider relations of power.

Indeed, national cultures like the 'English' are not repositories of shared symbols to which the entire population accesses with equal ease. Rather, they are to be approached as sites of contestation in which competition over definition takes place (Skey, 2013: 43).

As Mercer (1994: 43) has noted, 'Identity only becomes an issue when it is in crisis, when something assumed to be fixed, coherent and stable is displaced by the experience of doubt and uncertainty.' With the decline of Empire during the first half

of the twentieth century, processes of decolonisation and increasing levels of migration, the central tenets of 'Britishness' came increasingly to be questioned. Many Western societies are reluctant to accept serious levels of cultural difference because there is a fear that difference will dislodge the dominant White culture. Skey (2013: 70) suggests that there is a 'managed limit' to the tolerance of difference and otherness, suggesting that 'these 'others' must be carefully positioned or domesticated if they are not to threaten the homely space of the nation.' In other words, for those (principally White) communities for whom national belonging is taken-for-granted, minoritised ethnic communities may represent a significant source of ontological insecurity.

Such ontological insecurity was plain to see during September and October 2015 when the UK and other European countries were forced to consider immigration in more detail as conflicts in Syria led to an unprecedented number of migrants and refugees attempting to cross the borders into Europe. It is estimated that more than 700,000 migrants made the journey to Europe in 2015 and, at the time of writing, in early 2016, this pattern shows little indication of slowing down (BBC, 2016). The prospect of more migrants and refugees in the UK re-energised a number of pre-existing anxieties about 'Englishness', 'Britishness' and ethnic identities and subsequently dominated debates about Britain's proposed exit from the European Union.

In a sporting context, Burdsey (2007) has argued that the perceived threats to England and 'Englishness' that have emerged largely as a result of the calls for devolution from Scotland and Wales have resulted in the emergence of a defensive 'Little Englander' mentality which is often articulated through sport (see also Maguire, 2011; Gibbons, 2014). According to Burdsey (2007: 84), this worldview 'stresses a

perceived common ancestry and homogeneity of English culture' and, in the process, constructs a notion of 'Englishness' that is plainly monocultural. The concern may not be 'otherness' per se, rather the extent of that 'otherness', coupled with an (in)ability to manage or minimise it. There are degrees of acceptability which, to some extent, defines an upper threshold of acceptable difference. Given the way that some minoritised ethnic groups are more inclined and/or able to adopt an acceptably 'English' way of living, it is widely conceived that some minoritised ethnic groups are more 'English' than others. Recent analyses of 'Team GB' athlete Mohamed 'Mo' Farah are cases in point (see Black, 2016; Burdsey, 2016). Black examined how British newspapers represented Farah during the 2012 London Olympic Games. He argues how Farah's significance lies in frequent media portrayals of his assimilated 'Britishness' and wider discourses of Britain's achieved multiculturalism. However, he stresses that such accounts depict a 'negotiated acceptance', whereby Farah's otherness remained embedded within his immigrant 'story', that is, once 'Somalian' but now 'British' (p.8). Burdsey's (2016) exploration of mainstream British newspapers found similar that media narratives presented Farah as familiar, palatable and reassuring to the public, but which also sustained hegemonic models of racialised nationhood and dominant ideologies around sport. Thus, in the case of Farah,

the 'other' is both separated 'from', but also included 'in', constructions of the national 'us', revealing an in-between category of individuals who display, and, indeed, may even perform, all the essential characteristics deemed appropriate of a particular national group. (Black, 2016: 4).

Being English and White are therefore, two defining principles of this acceptable (and manageable) identity. In sport, one's acceptability has, for a long time, been defined by adherence to a moral code of White 'Englishness'. Often this will revolve around the ways a person approaches sport in terms of their attitude or conduct. It may also be defined by something as apparently mundane as participating in a post-match drinking ritual. However, as Fletcher and Spracklen (2014) have argued, post-match drinking is highly symbolic of whiteness and, while on the whole participated in quite unproblematically by White people, is anything but mundane for many minoritised ethnic communities.

For every 'Little Englander', however, there are probably many more followers and participants of sport who have much more ambivalent connections to ideas of nation (Abell *et al.*, 2007). We cannot assume that everybody holds strong feeling towards their national identity; indeed Fenton (2007) observed that White English people are increasingly displaying national 'indifference'. Fenton demonstrates how, for many, 'Englishness' was not something of which they felt proud. This was attributed to the growing influence of right wing politics. It is also evident that for many minoritised ethnic communities these notions have very different connotations in relation to citizenship and ethnicity. Eade (1994) for instance, identified a perception amongst Bangladeshi Muslims that 'Englishness' is an ethnically exclusive identity and an expression of 'whiteness', while 'Britishness' possessed more pluralistic and less racialised overtones. In contrast, however, Bagguley and Hussain's (2005) research into the riots that took place in northern England in Summer 2001 demonstrated that some British Asians – specifically Pakistani Muslims – whilst proud of their cultural and ancestral heritage, were happy to 'fly the

flag' of St. George in support of the England football team and as a wider symbol of their national belonging while rejecting the Union Jack as a racist symbol associated with right wing politics. Given the St. George's flag's older historical symbolism of imperialism and domination, this identification can be viewed as highly ironic (see Fletcher, 2012).

A report published by the University of Essex in 2012 found that Muslims actually identify with Britishness more than any other Britons, but that many non-Muslim Britons still view Muslims as a potential "enemy within". Findings showed that 83% of Muslims are proud to be British citizens, compared to 79% of the general public; that 47% of non-Muslim Britons see Muslims as a threat; and only 28% of non-Muslim Britons believe Muslims want to integrate into British society (Moosavi 2012). More recently, a survey conducted by the BBC demonstrated contrasting evidence that 11% of British Muslims sympathise with fighting against the West; 20% believe Western liberal society can never be compatible with Islam; 11% feel that organisations which publish images of the Prophet Mohammed deserve to be attacked. Half of those interviewed stated that prejudice against Islam makes it very difficult to be a Muslim in Britain (Nawaaz, 2015). We should be cautious, therefore, in making simple assumptions about the national identifications of minoritised ethnic communities in this context, not least because of the wider complexities and ambiguities around the formation and re-working of national identities more broadly.

'British'/'Englishness', racialisation and whiteness

It is impossible to talk about British or English national identity without a discussion of ideas of 'race' and racism. This cannot be undertaken without having an

understanding of the historical legacy of the British Empire on national identity and sport. The role of sport in supporting the project of the British Empire, imperialism and the process of the British colonising many parts of the world has been well documented (see for example Holt 1989, Perkin 1989). From using sport as a way to keep the British troops happy, to the use of sport as a 'soft' means of social control, to sport's supposed ability to instil 'British' values to all parts of the world, sport was undeniably part of the colonial project. While the process of colonialism was informed centrally by ideas of nationalism, it was also heavily racialised (Fletcher, 2015). Indeed, Williams (2001: 18) suggests that the global reach and influence of the Empire was perceived by the British to demonstrate their natural 'superiority' over others, and regularly became 'intimately bound up with notions of white supremacy'.

We should be cautious, however, of painting a picture of sport being taken up by the colonies in a simple way and without contestation. In his discussion of cricket, Malcolm (2013) argues that the idea of this being the 'imperial game' projects a false homogeneity upon the Empire; obscuring the fact that its diffusion across parts of the new Empire territories was both uneven and heterogeneous. Even in those countries where cricket was exported and has subsequently been taken up as a national sport, the meanings attached to cricket have been creatively appropriated by different cultures, and have also become a defining feature of their (post-)colonial national identities (Appadurai, 1996; Carrington, 2010; Fletcher, 2015; Fletcher and Walle, 2015).

Like many other national cultural identities, ideas of 'Englishness' are heavily racialised. 'Englishness' blurs the ethnic and the national as the term 'English' is often used interchangeably to mean 'native born white English'. The Runnymede

Trust's report, *The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain* (2000) (commonly known as the 'Parekh Report') similarly argued that the terms 'British' and 'English' are racially coded. Modood (2013) goes as far as to say that the terms 'British' and 'English' are practically 'quasi-ethnic' due to their close identification with whiteness. The corollary effect of this is that 'Asianness' and 'Blackness' and 'Englishness' are perceived as being mutually exclusive. Gilroy (1993: 27-28) argues that such 'incompatibility' leads to cultural racisms:

The emphasis on culture allows nation and 'race' to fuse. Nationalism and racism become so closely identified that to speak of the nation is to speak automatically in racially exclusive terms. Blackness and Englishness are constructed as incompatible, mutually exclusive identities. To speak of the British or English people is to speak of white people.

Moreover, 'Englishness' is also usually portrayed as essentially male, heterosexual and able-bodied. In addition to minoritised ethnic communities, women homosexuals and people with disabilities are often subtly excluded from these representations. According to Spracklen (2013), whiteness is taken for granted in historical accounts of each Western nation's development. He argues that modern forms of nationalism in each of these Western nations 'construct imagined communities where belonging is associated with whiteness and nationalism becomes racialized and 'white-washed'" (Spracklen, 2013: 18). Under these circumstances whiteness is assumed to be the norm, the mainstream, and is

associated with 'the ruling hegemonic classes, which invented traditions that associated their heritage (their whiteness, their belonging, their usurpation of power) with the natural order of things' (Ibid.). English sport promotes a fixed, closed and racially homogeneous sense of national cultural identity, which demands integration and conformity of its citizens. But, ironically, England is not homogenously White and neither are participants of sport (Fletcher and Hylton, forthcoming 2016). Given this, it has become difficult, perhaps even impossible, to define what 'Englishness' is in the globalised, multicultural, multi-ethnic society of the twenty first century. As Carrington (2008: 127) writes, there is 'no outside racial Other to 'Englishness' any more'.

At the same time, there is a danger of assuming that difficulties over national belonging are confined only to visible minoritised ethnic groups. While we would caution against any argument suggesting that being White does not equate to some degree of privilege in the UK, we also advocate that being White does not mean one will necessarily be privileged in the same way, or to the same extent as other White people (Fletcher and Hylton, forthcoming 2016). Within the White racialised hierarchy there are a number of strata with varying degrees of acceptability, or 'shades of White' (Long and Hylton, 2002). For instance, those who appear phenotypically White, including Irish, Jewish and new migrant communities, such as Eastern Europeans, continue to occupy marginal positions. For example, Long et al. (2014) explored how leisure and sport spaces are encoded by new migrants, but how struggles over those spaces and the use of social and cultural capital are racialised. Moreover, Spracklen et al. (2015) argue that White European migrants find it easier to access leisure and sport provision when compared to other migrants, such as Black Africans. Being phenotypically White affords some degree of privilege

over Black migrants, but their White appearance only gains them contingent inclusion.

Clearly, despite a growing tendency to conflate the terms, 'races' and 'nations' are not the same thing. Neither is a monolith; both are constituted by diverse individuals and contending cultural flows. However, given such strong associations between 'Englishness' and whiteness, for many Black and minoritised ethnic communities the label 'English' is antithetical to their inclusion.

'Englishness' and diaspora

Having outlined some of the ways in which concepts of racialisation and whiteness underpin connections between 'Englishness', minoritised ethnic communities and sport, we move to focus attention more clearly on these groups and, in particular, how we might best conceptualise their sporting involvement and national identity.

In recent years there has been a growing appreciation of the need to consider the centrality of popular cultural forms, including sport, in the lives of migrant communities (Long *et al.*, 2014; Fletcher, 2015; Spracklen *et al.*, 2015). In trying to do so, it may be better to conceptualise such communities using the concept of 'diaspora' rather than 'migrant'. As minoritised ethnic communities in England are now multi-generational, with many now born and raised in the country, the terms 'migrant' and 'migration' are less relevant than in previous times. Over the last two or three decades the terms 'diaspora' and 'transnational' have gained greater cogency. Malcolm (2013) identifies four reasons for this. First, many of the people whom are now described as diasporic are not actually migrants, but the offspring of those who

have previously experienced migration. Second, the term migrant is nation-centric, where nation and society are unproblematically equated. Third, the term migrant, when used as a euphemism for describing those 'not from this place', marginalises, racialises and 'Others' entire communities. Finally, migration suggests a once-off event, an act of dis-/re-location, and a one-way process whereby 'old' affiliations and identifications with a 'homeland' are severed and automatically replaced by new affiliations and identifications with the settling place when: 'In contemporary societies migrations are more commonly multiple and multi-directional' (Malcolm, 2013: 107).

Ever since different communities began processes of global migration, sport has been an integral feature in how we conceptualise and experience the notion of being part of a diaspora (Burdsey et al., 2013). Over time, diasporic communities have established numerous ways of maintaining links with 'home' even as they put down new roots. One conduit through which the interplay between old and new homes was reproduced was through the love of sport many brought with them (Raman, 2015). For many early migrants, sport features prominently in how they imagine their new 'homes' to be. Burdsey et al. (2013) argue that sport provides diasporic communities with a powerful means for creating transnational ties, but also shapes ideas of their ethnic and racial identities. Amongst other things sport can provide important coping mechanisms from the experience of being dislocated, but it can also afford opportunities for political mobilisation/resistance and strategies of adaptation to an unknown (and often, hostile) social environment. According to Burdsey et al. (2013: 211) 'sport becomes a realm of symbolic attachment by diasporic communities that betrays a whimsical, passing affiliation with sport; rather sport is a significant medium through which local experiences are translated, diasporic parameters reconfigured and national identity(ies) complicated.'

Conceiving of national identity, including 'Englishness', through a diasporic lens is useful because the idea of diaspora, and the attendant notions of diaspora space (Brah, 1996) and diasporic consciousness, acknowledges that national identity exists across the boundaries of nation states rather than within them. Kalra et al. (2005) for instance, argue that diaspora means to be *from* one place, but *of* another. Belonging to a diaspora is not necessarily about identification with a single source of cultural heritage. Rather, diaspora should be conceptualised as a state of consciousness, which is not necessarily linked with a sense of rootedness and/or belonging (Anthias, 2001). Consequently, belonging is never a question of affiliation to a singular idea of ethnicity or nationalism, but rather about the *multivocality of belongings* (Kalra et al., 2005: 29). As Fletcher (2012: 617) has argued, 'diasporic identities do not simply revolve around either, the reproduction of existing cultures within new settings; or the appropriation of new ones. Instead, diasporic identities must [though we would now amend to 'may usefully'] be viewed as being fluid, syncretic and hybrid'.

Within a diasporic lens, it is insufficient to think in terms of either/or identities. It is not the case that being English translates to *not* being South/British Asian, Black etc., and vice versa. Rather, a diasporic lens encourages us to accept the possibility of a third space of hybrid identities. Bhabha's (1990) notion of a 'third space' is culturally grounded and closely linked to ideas of hybridity. In particular, the 'third space' is useful for thinking about how diasporic communities negotiate their belonging in unfamiliar and foreign environments. The 'third space' is useful for conceptualising how England's migrant and diasporic communities have been excluded from full participation in mainstream society and sport, and similarly, how they have sought integration and independence whilst ensuring cultural fidelity to

their ancestral home(s) (Raman, 2015). The supposition is that in the 'third space' Black and minoritised ethnic communities find an alternative space, where they can belong whilst also bridging the void between their national and ethnic identities, without fear or constraint.

For example, Ratna (2009, 2014) identifies how British Asian females are utilising their agency to empower themselves within sport by adopting ways of behaving that are both 'Islamic' and 'Western'/'English'. Farooq-Samie's (2013) examination of Muslim female basketballers argues that much of the research has depicted Muslim females as victims of their religion and victims of the veil. Yet via sport, many Muslim women are able to present their bodies in much the same way as non-Muslim women would. Similarly, Bains' (2014) study of kabaddi amongst members of the British Indian diaspora turns the idea of sporting participation on its head by arguing that it is their *non*-involvement in kabaddi that forms an important part of their identities as Punjabi women in the UK. Consequently, Fletcher (2012) argues that 'British' and 'Asian' are not exclusive cultural categories that form separate identities; rather they are dynamic and fluid identities which, if desired, fuse to form 'hybrid' identities that are *both* British *and* Asian. Taking this all into account, Carrington (2015) reflects that diaspora is a useful framework to think about social movements, relations and politics in a way that does not automatically defer to the nation-state as either the primary or only unit of analysis. Conceptualising minoritised ethnic communities as diasporic communities may therefore provide a more sophisticated lens through which we can explore the connections between 'Englishness', ethnicity in sport.

‘Englishness’, multiculturalism and sport

The final concept that we identify as having utility in understanding the nexus of sport, ‘Englishness’ and ethnicity is multiculturalism. Put succinctly, multiculturalism (at least in its utopian sense) celebrates both cultural difference and diversity, whereby diasporic groups are encouraged to be ‘British’, but without discarding their cultural heritage. In the UK multiculturalism was welcomed by many people as an advance on assimilationist models of ‘race relations’ in the embrace rather than denial of cultural diversity. However, the doctrine of official multiculturalism is problematic as it often fails to break out of the discourse of ‘race’. In the context of what Barker (1981) called ‘the New Racism’, which shifted the discourse of racism from biology to ethnicity and culture, a new form of racial stratification emerged based on stereotypical notions of absolute ethnic difference (Carrington *et al.*, 2016). Ethnicity was intended by advocates of multiculturalism to be conceived of as a dynamic and fluid process of cultural self-identification and conceptually distinct from the objectifying and static category of ‘race’. Conceptualised in this way we can understand that British-born minoritised ethnic communities challenge dominant discourses about authenticity, belonging and citizenship and thus allude to the belief that ethnic identities are fluid, syncretic and hybrid, as opposed to static and fixed. In spite of this, under the New Racism, multiculturalism and ethnicity often rearticulated the old meanings of ‘race’ within a new socio-political discourse of inherent difference. Ethnicity became an imposed, fixed and immutable category, a cultural prison from which those it embraced could rarely escape; something Gilroy (1987) called ‘ethnic absolutism’.

It is commonly believed, for example, that for minoritised ethnic groups to be accepted within sports cultures they must assimilate into the normative racialised

and nationalist codes of each (King, 2004; Burdsey, 2007). This assimilationist model is central to the political right's explanation of how to deal with issues of racial and cultural difference. The model revolves around the argument that cultural antagonisms may arise between White English people and minoritised ethnic communities who continue to celebrate the countries of their ancestral home(s). The implication is that occupying multiple identities must mean one has divided loyalties (see Burdsey, 2006; Fletcher, 2012; Raman, 2015). Thus, the removal of difference is on the terms of the dominant culture and moreover, acceptance into the dominant culture is conditional on minoritised ethnic communities de-prioritising their own cultural history and identities. In these instances, it is thought that the more Anglicised minoritised ethnic communities would abandon their traditional beliefs in favour of embracing 'Western'/English/White culture. Current evidence suggests that where minoritised ethnic individuals deprioritise, or abandon altogether, cultural signifiers of their 'difference' in favour of embracing 'Western'/English/White culture they will gain greater levels of acceptance and be deemed to be 'more like us', or more 'English' compared to those who are reluctant/unable to adapt.

Conclusion

Our survey of some of the core concepts that are likely to underpin the investigation of English national identity and ethnicity have highlighted a number of key issues. First, we identified the ongoing conceptual and common sense con(fusion) between 'Britishness' and 'Englishness' that continues to problematise debates around English national identity(ies). Second, we pointed to the socially constructed nature of English national identity that is underpinned by discussions of who is included and

who is excluded; arguing that this boundary drawing exercise requires continual (re)defining, (re)negotiation and contestation. The claim was then made that it is impossible to separate any discussion of national identity, perhaps particularly 'Englishness', from ideas of 'race' and the ongoing racialisation of our understandings of national belonging and the nationalist project. In addition, given historical associations of 'Englishness' with whiteness, we proposed this latter concept to be fundamental in exploring the experiences of minoritised ethnic communities in sport. It was then suggested that a useful way for understanding the experiences of many minoritised ethnic groups is through a diasporic lens, which offers multiple and varied connections between different national contexts and sport. We ended with a short overview of the concept of multiculturalism as applied to national identity, focusing particularly on the extent to which ideas of diversity and tolerance appear so far to be limited in a sporting context.

Perhaps the most common theme of discussion throughout the chapter has been the extent to which minoritised ethnic communities might claim to 'belong' to contemporary notions of 'Englishness'. We have tried to show how this is by no means a straightforward question, and that it might be better to understand such connections as fluid and context bound; that in some instances minoritised ethnic communities may feel a strong association with English and/or British national identity, and work hard to integrate and align themselves to such cultural markers, while on other occasions, those same people may feel equally strongly excluded from such ideas and reject (and/or be rejected by) the idea of a national identity – or certainly one which calls itself 'English'.

Many minoritised ethnic communities have made England/Britain their home and identify themselves as primarily English/British. It is not necessarily the case that

these individuals are loathed to see themselves as English; it is more likely, as Carrington (1999) has argued, that they are against constructions of White 'Englishness' that do not allow for their inclusion, and/or demonise their cultural heritage(s). Moreover, it is not the case that this cultural hybridity represents a denial or loss of identity. It is conceivable that minoritised ethnic groups are able to draw upon different frameworks of self-definition and interpretation and, within different contexts, without experiencing a sense of confusion and/or crisis. In a society so culturally diverse, what English identity is (or means) has become increasingly hard to define and therefore to identify with. Indeed, it is probably better to say that, given the degree of contestation surrounding its applicability for different ethnic groups, 'Englishness' is now a greater myth and more insecure than it ever has been.

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